Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)

Developing Recommendations - Managing Recreation on the Madison River <u>Madison River Citizen Advisory Committee (MCAC) - Meeting #Four</u>

August 21, 2012

Session Summary

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

Within the Advisory Committee's Charter, develop consensus recommendations around the following 4 tasks:

- 1. Review and assess river recreation information and existing conditions on the Madison River.
- 2. Identify and describe desirable or acceptable recreation conditions for the Madison River.
- 3. Identify and describe conditions that would warrant implementation of various management actions.
- 4. Develop a list of those management actions (less restrictive to more restrictive).

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Move forward on the collaborative process.
- Affirm the calendar; prep for the September MCAC meeting.

COMPLETED AGENDA ITEMS

What's new from MCAC member "traplines"?

- People wonder how the Dam influences the issues being addressed
- Some still wonder what problems exist that need fixing
- Some suggest that the lower River might be okay the way it is
- · Questions included:
 - Will management actions mean "take-aways?
 - Will there be additional restrictions?
 - Will there be solutions that add to capacity for recreationists?
- Some wondered if there are lessons from the Beaverhead/Big Hole experiences
- Some still feel that displacement is an issue that needs to be addressed
- There is an assumption that there will be "limits" as a result of this process
- Some reminded about the importance of access by foot only to fish in parts of the upper water
- There needs to be more discussion among MCAC members and not with the facilitator
- Some wondered what happens after this will there be another CAC to monitor the situation? A commenter suggested that the review process on the Beaverhead/Big Hole was not satisfactory because it was more of a "popularity" contest about regulations rather than a review based on criteria and objective measurement

Moving Forward in the Collaborative Process:

First Draft - River Recreation Desired Conditions and Acceptable Conditions (When conditions fall below "acceptable", these may constitute triggers that warrant a change in management from what's currently in place)

<u>Anglers</u>

"Desired" River Recreation Conditions

- World Class Fishing Experience
 - Resource is in great shape as to provide opportunity to catch good #/size
 - Users are having a quality experience
 - 100% users having positive experience
- No garbage at sites or along river; 100% removal no glass bottles on entire river.
- Education campaign available at all sites along the river and leads to users demonstrating proper etiquette
 - People provide proper spacing per each activity
 - o Etiquette demonstrated at sites and on the river
- Wade Fishing
 - o Opportunity for Solitude
 - Opportunity to fish every 100 yards
 - World class fishing experience (as described above)
- Float Fishing
 - No waiting to launch your boat at any site
 - Adequate parking (lots never over fill)
 - World class fishing experience (as described above)

"Acceptable" River Recreation Conditions (When conditions fall below "acceptable", these may constitute triggers that warrant a change in management from what's currently in place)

- World Class Fishing Experience exists but is not as great as above
 - Resource is in good shape and doesn't have an abnormal (crisis or extreme)
 drop in fish population in any stretch of the river- can still have a good day but may catch less/smaller fish than in the "desired conditions"
 - 80% of users report having a positive experience
- Garbage
 - Users would never find more than 1 piece of trash per day per site and never finds trash along river
 - Warm Springs to Blacksford users would never observe more than 10 pieces of trash per site per day and none along the river People are taking their trash out with them or disposing of it properly and the only trash present is accidental no glass bottles on entire river.

Anglers "Acceptable" River Recreation Conditions cont.

- Education campaign is available at the busiest sites along the river
- Wade Fishing
 - Solitude exists but you may need to walk further to obtain it
 - Opportunity to fish every ¼ mile
 - World class experience as described in the acceptable conditions are present
- Float Fishing
 - 15 minute wait to launch occurs no more than 20% of the time from June 1st to September 1st annually
 - Parking lots do not over fill their capacity more than 20% of the time from June 1st to September 1st annually
 - o World class experience as described in the acceptable conditions are present

Commercial/Economic/Local Communities

<u>Desirable and Acceptable Recreation Conditions (When conditions fall below</u> "acceptable", these may constitute triggers that warrant a change in management from what's currently in place)

- A healthy and productive fishery based on an annual FWP surveys that define fish population (count/mile) and health, i.e., no fish diseases, drought, invasive species, etc.
 - Acceptable When one or more of the following changes occur to the River which can be attributed to overall angling use, then management actions may need to be implemented: fish populations per river mile decline XX%, biology backed/based disease (i.e., Whirling Disease, invasive species, droung, Hebgen Dam breach, other acts of God).
- A. Outfitter Focused: A positive "quality experience" metric as measured by annual Outfitted client satisfaction surveys related to their stay/time on the Madison River.
 - Acceptable Management actions may need to be implemented when annual client satisfaction surveys decline XX% from the prior year (ex. 15%- 20%).

Commercial, etc. Desirable and Acceptable Recreation Conditions cont.

B. Commercial Non-Outfitter Focused: A positive client satisfaction metric for local businesses during the peak season (June, July & August) based on a range of parameters that are indicative of the health and viability of their businesses.

Acceptable - Management actions may need to be implemented when annual river user satisfaction surveys decline XX% from the prior year (ex. 15%- 20%).

3. Setting realistic expectations to educate (and potentially alter) river user ethics on the Madison River. Results of education would be measured by metrics from the FWP Bi-Annual User Survey which would establish a measurement baseline.

Acceptable - Management actions may need to be implemented when annual client satisfaction surveys decline XX% from the prior year (ex. 15%- 20%).

General Recreation

"Desired" Recreation Conditions

- The least amount of regulations/restrictions that protect the resource and allow all interests to enjoy the river without substantially impacting the quality of other user group's recreation experience.
- All user groups understand and are considerate of the needs and interests of other user groups and use appropriate ethics and etiquette.
- Continue to allow highly concentrated recreation use on the lower Madison (between Warm Springs and Black's Ford).

"Acceptable" River Recreation Conditions (When conditions fall below "acceptable", these may constitute triggers that warrant a change in management from what's currently in place)

 Ensure that unacceptable ratings don't exceed 20% for all user groups for all criteria, based on surveys conducted every two years.

At the end of the discussion, MCAC members generally agreed that this was a relatively good start – but that they still have work to do on finalizing conditions. The 2-day September meeting will finalize these; identify and come to agreement on objective triggers; and describe, discuss, and work to reach tentative agreement on possible management actions (least to more restrictive) if conditions fall below acceptable.

"Bullet Points" from This Meeting

MCAC members agreed to refer people to the website with the notes from this meeting – as well as the notes from the 3 previous meetings.

Prepping for the September 26, 27 MCAC Meeting in Bozeman

- Location FWP Headquarters
- Times 10:00 AM 5:00 PM on September 26; 8:00 AM mid-afternoon on September 27
- Homework:
 - Review the notes from previous meetings
 - Continue to think toward "desirable" and "acceptable" and what measurable triggers might look like
 - Think about possible management actions that might be triggered least to more restrictive
 - Run your traplines
- Agenda The agenda will be distributed to MCAC members and put on the website by September 19